

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
MCT-01 EUR-12 SSM-03 /080 W
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R 031501Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7089
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
SECDEF
DIA WASHDC

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CORRECTED COPY (TEXT)

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PINT, SY
SUBJECT: INTERNAL ROUNDUP: ALAWITE PROFESSOR SLAIN

1. EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED REPORT THAT FUNERAL HELD IN ALEPPO
MARCH 1 FOR SLAIN ALAWITE PROFESSOR FROM ALEPPO UNIVERSITY.
INITIAL REPORTS ARE THAT MAN'S NAME WAS YUSSEF AL-YUSSEF
AND HE CAME FROM VILLAGE OF JIBLE IN COASTAL MOUNTAINS
SOUTH OF LATAKIA. HE IS SAID TO BE A RELATIVE OF NATIONAL
COMMAND MEMBER MUHAMMAD HAYDAR. YUSSEF IS THE FOURTH
ACADEMIC TO BE SHOT IN THE LAST YEAR AND THE THIRD SLAIN.
LAST SUCH MURDER WAS THAT OF MRS. AL-ASSAD'S NEPHEW
ALI ABD ALI ALSO FROM ALEPPO U. IN EARLY NOVEMBER 1977.
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ALI'S MURDERERS WERE NEVER APPREHENDED.

2. WE ALSO RECEIVED REPORT THIS WEEK OF A RIOT WHICH
OCCURRED IN HAMA ON PROPHET'S BIRTHDAY (FEB. 19).
POLICE LT. COLONEL FROM DAMASCUS TOLD EMBASSY EMPLOYEE
ELEVEN PEOPLE ARRESTED IN CONNECTION WITH THIS INCIDENT.
ACCORDING TO THIS REPORT, WHEN MUSLIMS CAME OUT OF A

MOSQUE AFTER PRAYERS, THEY WERE INCITED TO MARCH ON THE CHRISTIAN QUARTER OF THE CITY WHERE THEY PROCEEDED TO DEMOLISH THE INTERIOR OF A CHRISTIAN-OWNED CAFE. SECURITY FORCES WERE DESPATCHED AND CONTAINED THE INCIDENT. NO REPORTS OF CASUALTIES RECEIVED. EMBASSY EMPLOYEE (WHO HIMSELF CHRISTIAN) SPECULATED THAT CHRISTIANS MAKE HANDY INITIAL TARGET FOR SUNNI ANIMOSITY BUT THE ALAWITES ARE THE ULTIMATE TARGET.

3. AS DEPARTMENT AWARE, THERE HAS BEEN A RESURGENCE OF EXPLOSIONS SINCE THE TIME OF THE PRESIDENTIAL REFERENDUM FEB. 8. THE MOST SPECTACULAR INCIDENT WAS THE ROCKETING OF FATAH OFFICES IN THE BARAMKE SECTION OF DAMASCUS IN MID-FEBRUARY. IT WAS INITIALLY REPORTED THAT A SIMILAR ATTACK WAS DIRECTED AGAINST A BAATH DISTRICT OFFICE, BUT WE NOW BELIEVE IT POSSIBLE THAT THE ONLY ONE ATTACK OCCURRED AND CONFLICTING REPORTS OVER WHO USED THE BUILDING CAUSED THE CONFUSION. OUR INFORMATION WOULD INDICATE THAT NO SERIOUS CASUALTIES OCCURRED DESPITE THE SOPHISTICATION OF THE ATTACK AND THE LETHALITY OF THE WEAPONS USED. PROBABLY AS A RESULT, WE HAVE RECEIVED REPORTS THAT INTELLIGENCE OFFICIALS ARE VISITING APARTMENTS IN THEIR DISTRICTS AND URGING RESIDENTS TO REPORT ANY VISITORS THEY ENTERTAIN WITH FOREIGN-LICENSED AUTOS. (OUR UK COLLEAGUES UNDERSTAND THAT THE CAR FROM WHICH THE ROCKETS REMOTELY FIRED HAD W. GERMAN TAGS AND WAS BELIEVED TO

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HAVE ENTERED THE COUNTRY FROM TURKEY OCCUPIED BY SEVERAL MEN BEARING ARGENTINE PASSPORTS.) KHALID FAHUM TOLD RECENT VISITOR THAT SOPHISTICATION OF THE ATTACK SUGGESTED ISRAELI COMPLICITY, BUT WE CAN THINK OF MANY OTHER CANDIDATES.

4. COMMENT: THESE INCIDENTS SUGGEST THAT IRAQ HAS AGAIN CHOSEN TO STIMULATE TROUBLE HERE AND THAT SUNNI-MINORITY TENSIONS CONTINUE TO PROVIDE THE MOST FERTILE GROUND FOR SOWING VIOLENCE AND TERRORISM.

PELLETREAU

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